

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

**1. Name of Property**historic name Peck, Sheldon, House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**street & number 355 East Parkside Avenuecity or town Lombardstate IL code IL county DuPage code 043 zip code 60148

	not for publication
	vicinity

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet \_\_\_\_\_ National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level of significance:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_\_\_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Sheldon Peck House  
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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	1	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: museum

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century: Greek Revival

Other: Upright & Wing

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: limestone, CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: weatherboard

roof: WOOD: shingles

other:

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Sheldon Peck House is a 1 ½ story Greek Revival house with 1-story additions to each side of the main block. The timber-framed main block, 20'6" wide x 23' deep, was constructed in 1839. The balloon-framed east wing was constructed c.1860 and is 13.5' wide and 23' deep. The west wing, 20' x 20', is a reconstruction of the original c.1848 west wing based on photographic, documentary and archaeological evidence. The house was continuously occupied by the Peck family from 1839 to 1996, when it was donated to the Lombard Historical Society. The Village of Lombard purchased the land on which the house sits from the Peck family in order to keep the house on its original site. The house is located at 355 E. Parkside Avenue, the southwest corner of Parkside and Grace Street, with historic St. Charles Road extending to the east (Parkside is a continuation of St. Charles Road) and the Chicago and North Western railroad tracks paralleling Parkside on the north. Originally at the northeast corner of a 175 acre farmstead, the house now sits on 1/3 of an acre in a neighborhood of houses developed from the late 1920s through the 1960s on Peck family land. The central business district of Lombard lies less than ½ mile to the west along the tracks.

### **Narrative Description**

#### **Summary of Physical Evolution**

The Peck House has evolved over time, including three additions, one subtraction and a substantial façade renovation during the time of the Peck family's residence. The original three sections (center-1839, west wing-c.1850, east wing-c.1860) remained in place with no known alterations during Sheldon and Harriet Peck's lifetime: from their construction in 1839 until Harriet's death in 1887. Because the family continued to occupy the house for another 110 years after Harriet Peck's death the house underwent several alterations and remodels. Today the Sheldon Peck House once again looks much as it did during Sheldon and Harriet Peck's occupancy.

In 1996-1998 the Lombard Historical Society, in conjunction with the Lombard Historic Commission, undertook a major renovation under the supervision of Preservation Architect Jack Luer. Because the exterior of the house had been altered over time by a stucco re-surfacing and new windows the house was deemed ineligible for the National Register, therefore no Historic Structure Report was undertaken. Although Illinois Historic Preservation Agency staff provided oversight on the reconstruction, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards were not applied. The project returned the house to a form resembling its early occupancy by the Pecks, from 1839 to 1868. Jack Luer provided the specifications and drawings for the project.

The main front of the house faces north. It fronts on East Parkside Avenue, a street which is a linear continuation of St. Charles Road. The Chicago & North Western Railway tracks separate Parkside from the continuation of St. Charles Road north of the tracks. St. Charles has been a major transportation route since at least the 1830s. The south-facing rear elevation would have overlooked the Peck family's fields and barnyard. Today the former farm fields are occupied by suburban housing.

The timber frame, including the tie beams in the attic, the location of the present-day window openings and doors and the east-west interior plank wall in the main block are all original to the house. The dividing walls, also of planks, between the main block and the east and west wings are original. In addition, the steep, narrow stairs to the attic, enclosed at the bottom with a door, are original. There is additional salvaged building material stored in the attic, including two c.1840 doors and a large quantity of timber frame members. This material was carefully tagged at the time of its storage but many of these tags have degraded over time. There is an inventory of this material in the Lombard Historical Society archives as well as extensive still and video photography documenting the removal, salvage and reconstruction process.

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**Setting**

The Sheldon Peck House is located in present-day Lombard at the southwest corner of St. Charles Road and Grace Street in an area that was open prairie when the federal surveyors arrived in 1839.<sup>1</sup> Railroad tracks lie immediately to the north of St. Charles Road opposite the house. Lombard's Main Street is ½ mile to the west and the wooded valley of the West Branch of the DuPage River, where Peck owned a wood lot, is another mile beyond. Two miles to the east, along the west side of the East Branch of the DuPage River is a major railroad junction with what was once the Grand Trunk Western line.<sup>2</sup> Chicago is 20 miles due east.

Today the Peck house is part of Lombard's regular grid of suburban lots. Grace Street was created early in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, shaving off a portion of both the Peck land and the house itself. St. Charles Road now takes a sharp turn to cross the railroad tracks, before it heads west on the north side of the railroad. Parkside, like Grace Street, was created after construction of the original house. What was once farmland on the east side of Grace Street is now a large park. To the south and west of the Peck House are small lots containing bungalows and Colonial Revival houses primarily of the 1920s.

The Sheldon Peck House originally sat at the northeast corner of an L-shaped 175 acre farmstead that was acquired by Sheldon Peck and his two oldest sons, John and Charles, following their arrival from upstate New York in 1836. All three Pecks purchased their land from the federal government in 1845, having lived on it since the spring of 1837. The house sits on a knoll from which the land falls away to the east, south and west. A series of outbuildings, including a large barn, once stood at the crest of the hill southwest of the house. A small stream lies ¼ mile to the south and the West Branch of the DuPage River is one mile to the west.

The house lies half a mile east of Lombard's village center and Main Street. To the east is Grace Street, which was laid out in the 1920s through the eastern edge of the Peck property. On the opposite side of Grace Street is The Commons, one of Lombard's largest parks. To the south and west is a residential area of small lots subdivided out of the Peck land starting in 1926, the year the farm was annexed into the village of Lombard. A Peck family descendant lives in the house immediately to the west on Parkside. On the block to the south and west of the Peck House there are a few brick houses from the 1920s, but mostly bungalows interspersed with infill from the 1960s. On the opposite side of the railroad tracks is an area of light industry and other commercial uses, including a 1960s post office.

Today the house sits on 2/3 of an acre. Despite the widening of the railroad right-of-way twice in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century and the construction of Parkside Avenue, the Sheldon Peck House still has a deep front yard. A small parking lot lies in the northwest corner of the lot. The wide back yard still has the mature black walnut that can be seen in early photographs of the house.

**The Sheldon Peck House Today—Exterior**

Today the Sheldon Peck House consists of the 1839 main block returned to its original 1 ½ story, low-pitched roof form. This block is flanked by a long west wing and the shorter, hipped-roof east wing. The entire house is sided with wooden clapboards and has a cedar shingle roof. The clapboards are painted white and the window and door trim is a gray-green. The original rubble foundation under the main block has been reinforced with concrete and a new concrete bulkhead replaces an earlier one on the south elevation.

The main block of the house measures 20'6" wide x 23' deep. This block has a central 2-vertical-panel door with a box lock that is flanked by two 9/6 double hung windows. These windows, like the double hung windows throughout the first floor of the house, have top sashes that are larger than the bottom. There is one centrally-placed window on the south elevation as well. A single 6/6 window lights each end—north and south—of the attic. A porch with four square wooden posts shelters the north front. The small brick chimney lies east of the ridgepole near the center of this block. All of the first floor openings on this block are original.

In order to restore the house to its appearance during Sheldon Peck's lifetime, the west wing was reconstructed in 1996. In order to improve the use of the room in this wing, the door was moved from its original central location to the east end of the south elevation. The south elevation still has three evenly-spaced openings, however: the 4-panel door and two 9/6 double hung windows. There is a single double hung window on the south elevation of this wing at the east end. The south elevation is set slightly back from the main

<sup>1</sup> *General Land Office Plats of Illinois, 1807-1891*. Township 39 was surveyed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1839 by Janes Thompson and John P. Thompson. Peck owned land in Section 8, Township 39N, Range 11E and Section 11, Township 39N, Range 10E. St. Charles Road, originally an Indian trail, was surveyed in 1843. Helen W. Ward & Robert W. Chambers: *Glen Ellyn: A Village Remembered*, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Now the Canadian & Union Pacific Railroad.



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block. There is a single double hung window on the north end of the west elevation of this wing. A porch with simple square posts, set slightly behind the front porch as it was when originally built, shelters the north front.

The east wing is considerably smaller than the west wing and connects seamlessly to the main block on the north elevation. It has a hipped roof. A 4-panel door on the north elevation lies close to the juncture of this wing with the main block. A single 9/6 double hung window is just to the east of the door. The rear, or south, elevation is a mirror image of this, but is set slightly back from the main block. The door on the south elevation is two-paneled and has a box lock. There are two evenly-spaced double hung windows on the east end of this wing. All of the openings on this wing are original.

A handicap ramp approaches the north door on the east wing, but this ramp is to be moved to the west wing this summer in order to provide easier access from the small parking lot at the northwest corner of the lot.

**The Sheldon Peck House Today—Interior**

The Sheldon Peck House today is used as a museum. The plan still reflects the three distinct original parts of the upright and wing house, including their separate entrances and different uses. This separation of parts is typical of the upright and wing house type. Original floors still exist throughout the house, concealed under an unfinished layer of floor boards of varying widths.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the depth provided by the timber framing, the modern lighting, electricity and security are unobtrusive.

The west wing, the largest space, is used for meetings and permanent exhibits. It is an open room displaying reproductions of Sheldon Peck paintings and a display case with boards that were found in the house that have the remains of landscape paintings on them.<sup>4</sup> The walls are wood plank.

The central block is divided into two rooms separated by an original 1839 plank wall. The front room is used as a living history display for life in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century. The ceiling frame is open, revealing joints typical for this period and broad axe marks on the timbers. The back room is a small exhibit area. This room is usually set up as a bedroom, but currently houses a special interactive exhibit on the Underground Railroad. Both rooms have wood plank walls and clearly show the house's timber framing and window openings. An original window opening in the west wall of the back room remains, although its outside is now covered over by the wall of the west wing beyond. There is a stove pipe hole in the wall between the two rooms. A narrow and steep staircase to the attic, original to the house, lies behind a door on the east wall of the front room.

The attic in the central block is used for storage of original building materials salvaged from the house at the time of the 1996 rehabilitation. The plates of the original timber frame can easily be seen in this room. The original timber tie beams, with flared ends giving them extra strength, were reused in the 1996-1996 reconstruction. Because the joints formed by these angles create a specific roof pitch, it is certain that the roof today looks as it did between 1839 and 1868 when Sheldon Peck was in residence. The modern furnace is housed in the attic.

The central block is the only section that has a basement. The original basement was probably shallow and was dug to a full depth at a later time. It has rubble walls, reinforced by a series of concrete overlays around the base. The original timber sills are still in place, as are the original 7 pairs of joists slotted into a replacement summer beam. These joists are logs with their tops flattened by a broad axe. Many of the joists still have bark on them. The logs are of various tree species as is typical of houses where timber was being cut from the house lot and nearby wood lot as needed.<sup>5</sup> The joists are unusually widely spaced: as a result, the original structure received reinforcement with additional posts and beams in 1996-1998.

There is a large rubble pile, quarter round, in the southeast corner of the basement whose original function has not been determined. It may be an early cistern. Archaeological work on this feature is planned for the future.

The original exterior entrance to the basement was on the west side of the house. A 3' wide opening in the rubble wall, with keystone edges, has been infilled with concrete. Today there is a concrete bulkhead on the south elevation.

<sup>3</sup> The original floors had significant decay, including a large hole where the wood stove had been. This decay is evident when viewed from the basement. The family covered the worn floors early in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century with linoleum. In order for the building to be used as a public museum it was necessary to "encapsulate" the original floors under a new, continuous floor.

<sup>4</sup> The paint on these boards has been analyzed and dates from the time of Sheldon Peck's occupancy of the house.

<sup>5</sup> Sheldon Peck had a wood lot on the site of the present-day Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Church Woods, Glen Ellyn.

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The east wing, like the main block, is divided between the front and the back. The front room is a small display area on the life of Sheldon Peck and his family as well as their work on the Underground Railroad and as abolitionists. This area also contains items for sale. Through a door in the south wall is a small service kitchen and an ADA bathroom. The original corner post of this wing is visible in the southwest corner of the kitchen next to the back door.

### **Integrity**

The integrity of the Sheldon Peck House is good, with a form and details that are identical to those reflected in 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs. The Sheldon Peck house speaks clearly of Lombard's early history and the vital role that Sheldon Peck and his family played in it. It tells an important story thanks to its association with the passionate anti-slavery work of the Peck family and with Sheldon's long and important career as an itinerant portrait painter.

It would be difficult to find an 1839 house that had been lived in for nearly 160 years while maintaining a high level of integrity. Given its long history and heavy use the Sheldon Peck House has good integrity in the central block and east wing. The frame, the walls and the window and door openings are all original in these sections of the house. The windows are reproductions that are true to the originals. The rafters are reproductions but are joined by original tie beams. Both of these features are based on solid photographic and architectural evidence. The west wing is a reconstruction based on photographic and archaeological evidence. The Sheldon Peck House is clearly recognizable today as representative of its appearance from 1839-1868.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☒ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART

SOCIAL HISTORY

### Period of Significance

1839-1868

### Significant Dates

1839

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

PECK, SHELDON

### Cultural Affiliation

n.a.

### Architect/Builder

n.a.

### Period of Significance (justification)

The Sheldon Peck House was occupied by Sheldon Peck and his family from 1839 until his death in 1868. Its form today reflects this period of occupation.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Sheldon Peck House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A because it can be documented as a stop on the Underground Railroad and a place where anti-slavery meetings were held throughout Sheldon Peck's occupation (1839-1868). The Sheldon Peck House is also eligible under Criteria B for its association with Sheldon Peck, a widely-admired itinerant portrait painter and radical abolitionist. Built in 1839 and lived in by the Peck family until 1996, the Peck House is significant locally, for the state of Illinois, and nationally as the home of Sheldon Peck, a radical abolitionist, keeper of a documented Underground Railroad station and prolific itinerant portrait painter. Its period of significance begins in 1839 and ends in 1868, the year of Sheldon Peck's death.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Peck House was one of the first houses built in Lombard by a family whose descendants still live in the area today. Sheldon Peck was a radical abolitionist: speaking widely on the subject, hosting speakers in his house, distributing the anti-slavery newspaper, the *Western Citizen*, and standing as a DuPage County delegate for the anti-slavery Liberty Party. Peck's home became a station on the Underground Railroad as documented by his youngest son Franklin (Frank) and his neighbors. The house is a rare surviving example of a documented Underground Railroad station. The Sheldon Peck House is also important for its association with the artistic career of Sheldon Peck, an itinerant portrait painter. Sheldon Peck's career flourished in Vermont, New York and Illinois prior to the invention of photography. Today, he is one of America's most widely recognized and admired folk artists. It is exceptionally rare to be able to associate a specific site with the long-term residency of an itinerant artist.

**Evolution of the House**

The Sheldon Peck House was lived in by the Peck family for 157 years. The large family was never wealthy. The heavy use of the house and the family's alterations, over many generations, using re-used materials are evidence of their thrift.<sup>8</sup> The alterations themselves can be seen as part of the Peck House story.

**1839**

The main block of the Sheldon Peck House was first occupied by the family in November of 1839.<sup>9</sup> It was a 20'6" wide x 23' deep timber framed, 1 ½ story house with the gable ends facing north and south. There was a basement under this original section. The basement was dirt with a rubble stone foundation. The house had a central door with a single double-hung window on each side of the door. There was another double-hung window centered in the gable end of the attic. Based on an existing window frame in the west wall of this block, there was at least one window in each first floor wall on the east and west end. Evidence in the rubble stone foundation suggests that there was a basement entrance on the west end of the house towards the original barns. The roof had the low pitch typical of this period. The house was sheathed in wood clapboards. The house was heated by a wood stove with a small brick chimney protruding through the roof near the rear of the main block. This method of heating lasted until the installation of a gas heater in 1953.<sup>1</sup> This was the same year the first hot water heater was installed.

<sup>8</sup> One family story says that the windows Frank Peck installed during his alterations c.1910 were ones he scavenged while helping rebuild after the 1871 Chicago Fire.

<sup>9</sup> Sheldon Peck Land Patent from the United States Government, 2/11/1842: "That in the month of November 1839 a dwelling house was built upon the said tract which has stood and remained thereon from the time of its erection till the present time..and has lived in said house and made it his home from the month of Nov. 1839 till date of this affidavit."



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Due to its long occupancy, the layout and room uses of this original block are not known. The internal plank wall suggests a front room and a back room.<sup>10</sup> A steep, narrow, enclosed staircase runs up the east wall to the attic. This staircase is original to the house and appears to have had a door at the bottom since the time of construction.

A feature of the Peck House typical of early upright and wing houses, is that it was never raised on a high basement. Covered porches ran across the north front of both the main block and the west wing. A single step brought you onto the porch and another step into the house.

**c.1850**

The Peck house had two wings. The west wing built first.<sup>11</sup> Investigations by preservation architect Jack Luer as well as archaeological and documentary evidence suggest that Sheldon Peck added this room with the money he obtained by selling a right-of-way to the railroad in the late 1840s.<sup>12</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs indicate that this wing was similar in size to the later east wing, approximately 20' square. With a low pitched roof and a ridge line running east-west, it had a center door on the north elevation flanked by double-hung windows. There were two windows in the west wall. This wing, badly deteriorated, was removed by the family in 1910 and rebuilt during the 1997-1999 building campaign by the village of Lombard.<sup>13</sup>

**c.1860**

The east wing (13'6" wide x 23' deep) appears to have been the third section of the house to be built in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Until the creation of Grace Street in the late 1920s forced the Pecks to sell part of the land this wing was built on, the east wing was probably 20' wide. It is possible this wing was built with money Sheldon Peck received from his second sale to the railroad for right-of-way in 1856. Unlike the main block and west wing, the east wing was balloon framed rather than timber framed. It is a single story. When the family reduced the size of this wing, they created a hipped roof to replace the original single gable. The east wing had north and south elevations that mirrored each other: a door close to the main block of the house and a double hung window adjacent to the door on the east. This wing did not have a porch across the front. By the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century this wing contained the kitchen.

**1860-1895**

The children gradually began to marry and move away starting with George in 1854 and continuing throughout the 1860s and early 1870s. Sheldon died in 1868, leaving the farm to Harriet for the rest of her life. The children were to inherit in equal shares upon Harriet's death, but they executed quit claim deeds to her in 1876. Harriet lived nearly 20 years after Sheldon's death: she died in 1887 and the estate was divided equally among the ten surviving children. The youngest, Frank, was running a general store in Sheldon, Illinois, but he had always wanted to farm. Gradually he acquired the shares of most of his siblings. By 1895 he was able to return to the farm, remarry and start a family.

**1895-1910**

Frank and his wife moved into a house that had seen little change since the last addition was put on c.1860. As a young man working to help rebuild Chicago after the great fire of October 1871, Frank had brought home four salvaged 2/2 double hung windows to replace original windows downstairs. The house still had no central heating, hot water or indoor plumbing. Frank and Ida immediately installed linoleum to cover the worn plank floors on the first floor. Their first child was born in 1899, quickly followed by two more in 1900 and 1904. By 1910 they decided that the house needed to be updated.

<sup>10</sup> When the house was acquired by the Lombard Historical Society in 1996 this portion of the house still had its original two room layout. The front room of this section of the house survived into the modern era as the "living room."

<sup>11</sup> Archaeological investigations done by NIU Contract Archaeology in 1997 found the original stone posts for this wing. The dimensions of the current rebuilt wing are based on this evidence.

<sup>12</sup> DuPage County, IL Document #5706, Book 11, p.314. *Right of Way*, Sheldon Peck to Galena, Chicago & Union Railroad, 4/15/1848 (filed 12/10/1850). Peck sold the railroad 50' of his lot for \$30 (he had purchased the land in 1842 for \$1.25 an acre).

<sup>13</sup> Archaeological work done in 1997 suggests that this wing was built on a stone foundation laid directly on the ground, hence its rapid deterioration from moisture, insects and rodents.

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In 1910 Frank and Ida Peck removed the dilapidated west wing and raised the roof (using wood salvaged from the west wing) on the central block to create a true second floor with a windowed dormer on the west end. The Pecks also stuccoed the exterior of the house at this time. A photograph of the rear of the house, c.1910, shows 1/1 and 2/2 double-hung windows on the rear façade as well as the new stucco.

**1926-1928**

In 1926 the land the Peck house stood on was annexed into the village of Lombard, bringing public water, sewer and electricity to this part of town. With the annexation came the creation of Grace Street to the east. The width of the new street shaved land off the eastern portion of the Peck homestead. To accommodate the street and the sidewalk Frank and Ida removed approximately 6' of the original east wing, creating a hipped roof on the shortened room. With the salvaged materials they created a shed-roofed, enclosed back porch.

**1953**

Frank Peck died in 1947 and the house was inherited by his youngest daughter Alyce Mertz and her husband Robert. The Mertz's took out a bank loan in 1953 in order to do some major remodeling. They added a bathroom under the stairs that extended into the back porch of the 1920s—the house's first bathroom, over 110 years after the Pecks had first moved in. Alyce and Robert also removed the Franklin stove and installed a gas heater on the first floor. They installed new windows on the second floor and remodeled the kitchen in the east wing.

**1986**

In 1986 Alyce's son Allen, Sheldon Peck's great-grandson, purchased the house from his mother. He remodeled the kitchen once again and installed new windows on the first floor, new wiring and, for the first time, central heat and air conditioning. It was Allen Mertz who gave the house to the Lombard Historical Society in 1996.

At the time of the Mertz's contribution to the Historical Society, the house rooms had uses similar to those they had always had: the main block housed a living room in front and a bathroom and bedroom in back with a steep and narrow stairway on the east wall, behind a door, leading to a small landing and two upstairs bedrooms. The east wing was a large kitchen with an enclosed back porch.

After much discussion with Village officials and the Lombard Historic Commission, the Historical Society decided to return the Sheldon Peck House to its appearance during Sheldon Peck's lifetime. The framing, the plank walls, many of the window openings, the stairs, and numerous doors of Sheldon Peck's original house, minus the west wing, were still in place.

**Early History**

Sheldon Peck (1797-1868) and his wife Harriet Corey Peck (1806/7-1887) were born in Vermont.<sup>14</sup> They were married there in 1824. The early years of their marriage set a pattern that was to persist for the next four decades, with farming and Sheldon's portrait painting providing a living for a family that grew to include ten children.<sup>15</sup>

In 1828 the Peck family moved to the town of Jordan in Onondaga County, New York an important settlement on the newly-opened Erie Canal.<sup>16</sup> The Canal provided Sheldon with a convenient transportation network to carry him from one portrait customer to

<sup>14</sup> The researchers at the Lombard Historical Society have created a very complete outline of the family's history. This outline is the source for the bulk of the chronological history.

<sup>15</sup> Children born in Vermont: John (1824) and Charles (1827). Born in New York: George (1829), Abigail (1831-died in infancy), Alanson (1833-died in infancy), Watson (1835/6?). Born in Illinois: Martha (1837), Henry (1839), (Alanson 2—1840, not verified), Susan (1843), Abigail 2 (date not known), Sanford (1847), Franklin (1853).

<sup>16</sup> In 1805 the Seneca and Cherry Valley Turnpikes were built through Jordan. In 1819 an early section of the Erie Canal opened there, along with a major feeder that provided water to the canal. A hotel was built in Jordan in 1820, a good location for Sheldon Peck to make contact with potential clients. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s Jordan's population and industry grew rapidly. Today the central business district of Jordan is on the National Register. See:

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/NY/Onondaga/districts.html>. The center of Elbridge, where the Pecks owned land, is also on the National Register.

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another.<sup>17</sup> While living in New York the Pecks met the large Churchill family, headed by Methodist minister 'Deacon' Winslow Churchill. The Churchills were to become the Pecks' neighbors in Illinois. Although the Peck family seems to have prospered in New York, buying land twice in the adjacent town of Elbridge, in August of 1836 they sold their land and moved to Illinois. After traveling the Erie Canal to Buffalo then taking the boat from Buffalo through the Great Lakes to Chicago, they arrived in Illinois that fall.<sup>18</sup>

At the time of the Pecks' arrival, Chicago was a city of 3000 and DuPage County (although not yet separated from Cook County) had a population of fewer than 3500. The signing of the last treaty with the Potawatomi in 1833 and the start of construction on the Illinois & Michigan Canal in 1836 prepared Chicago and the territory around it for exponential growth. The Pecks stayed in Chicago over the winter of 1836-37, until the birth of their daughter Martha the following May. While in Chicago, Sheldon painted at least four portraits.<sup>19</sup> Although 1837 brought a financial panic that slowed commerce nationwide, Peck and his family continued westward into the prairie and wooded groves beyond frontier Chicago. They would follow the Babcock brothers, who had also come from the Erie Canal area of Onondaga County in New York. The Babcocks, relatives of the Churchills, settled in 1833 along the East Branch of the DuPage River in the area that would become Glen Ellyn and Lombard.<sup>20</sup>

Sometime in 1837 Sheldon and Harriet traveled west on the old Indian Trail that was to become St. Charles Road.<sup>21</sup> After what was probably two days of travel, including crossings of the Des Plaines and DuPage Rivers and Salt Creek, they arrived at the high ground lying between the East and West Branches of the DuPage River in a location known as Babcock's Grove. Here they decided to stop and stake their claim near their friends the Churchills from upstate New York. They were joined by soon-to-be-friend Thomas Filer and his family as well as several dozen others.<sup>22</sup> In 1839 DuPage County separated from Cook County, with Naperville as the county seat. By 1846 all of the land in Peck's township (York) and most of the land in adjacent townships had been claimed and/or purchased. Sheldon Peck officially purchased his first 80 acres in February 1842.<sup>23</sup> His oldest son John purchased 40 acres in 1844 (when he turned 19) and another 40 in 1845. Second oldest son Charles purchased 40 acres on the south edge of Sheldon's claim in 1847 (when he turned 19).<sup>24</sup>

Thanks to extensive woodlands (the "grove" in Babcock's Grove) along the river to the west of them, the settlers had a ready supply of wood to build houses and barns. According to his 1842 land patent, Sheldon Peck and his family were living in their house by November 1839. Peck's youngest son Frank noted that oak logs were hauled from the woods for two years in order to build the house and barn.<sup>25</sup>

The first section of the Peck house was a 1 ½ story single bay upright house with an entrance on the north and a barn to the southwest. The house was timber framed with a limestone foundation and a dirt basement. It had no fireplace. Heating and cooking were both provided for by a wood stove. The well was to the south outside the back door. The outhouse was located between the house and the barn. Based on early atlases, Peck's farm fields and orchard lay to the south and west.<sup>26</sup>

A large additional room was added to the east c.1850, probably using the cash received from the sale of land to the railroad. This section was also timber-framed. As each section of the Peck House was built it was given its own entrance. Based on photographic

<sup>17</sup> Jordan, west of Syracuse near Lake Oneida, is centrally located between Albany to the east and Rochester to the west.

<sup>18</sup> Contemporary accounts say it was possible to travel from Buffalo to Chicago in less than a week, weather permitting. David E. Maas & Charles M. Weber, eds., *A Bicentennial View: DuPage Discovery 1776-1976* (1976), p.26.

<sup>19</sup> 1837 portraits of Chicago residents William W. and Phebe Welch are in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>20</sup> See [http://www.dupagehistory.org/dupage\\_roots/Chapter2\\_1.htm](http://www.dupagehistory.org/dupage_roots/Chapter2_1.htm) *History of DuPage County--DuPage Roots*. In Chapter 2, "The Pioneer Epoch to 1850: Rivers & Groves."

<sup>21</sup> Called the St. Charles Road because the town of St. Charles lobbied hard for it to be officially surveyed and maintained as a road. Lombard refused to adopt the new name and stubbornly continued to call this road Lake Street well into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Helen W. Ward & Robert W. Chambers, *Glen Ellyn: A Village Remembered*. (Glen Ellyn: Glen Ellyn Historical Society, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> There is a discrepancy between the census (29 male residents) and the land patent records (17 land owners). The settlement situation was so fluid during these early years that an exact count is difficult. Somewhere between 15 and 30 families lived in the area in 1840.

<sup>23</sup> *Family Maps of DuPage County*, p.114. Sheldon Peck's original land patent, witnessed by Thomas Filer on 2/11/1842, states that he had laid claim to the land in September 1838 and occupied the house in November 1839.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Memoir of Frank Peck. A 39 page manuscript written by Peck in 1929 with his recollections of the years 1860-1876. A copy is in the collections of the Lombard Historical Society. The length of this building effort corresponds with the large size of the barn.

<sup>26</sup> Bennett, L.G., E. A. Lyon & Horace Brooks, compilers. *DuPage County Atlas*. (1862).



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evidence, the west wing appears to have been a single room. It had no basement or attic. The house now began to take on the appearance of a true "upright and wing" house, a form that Peck and his New York state neighbors would have been very familiar with.

A small east wing was added c.1860, completing the typical upright and wing ensemble. The original purpose of this wing is not known. By the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century it housed the kitchen.

**Methodism, Temperance and Abolition**

At the time that Sheldon and Harriet Peck were living in New York, a strong religious revival was sweeping through the state's country towns and river valleys. Fundamentalist in nature, this revival was strongly pro-temperance and anti-slavery and was so fervent that the area became known as "the burned-over district." For decades, temperance and anti-slavery sentiments were deeply intertwined in many evangelical Protestant denominations.

The Pecks were Methodists, a denomination that had been formed following the American Revolution in 1784. Methodism, with its strong emphasis on the individual's religious experience, preachers who spoke easily to the "common man" and strict moral code, was a religion ideally suited to rural and frontier towns. The Methodist denomination was also highly organized with itinerant preachers and "preaching stations" throughout the country and regular camp meetings. In Sydney Ahlstrom's *A Religious History of the American People* he notes that "No group prospered more in the West."<sup>27</sup> By 1844 Methodists were "the most numerous religious body in America, with 1,068,525 members, 3988 itinerant preachers, 7730 local preachers and an incalculable number of regular hearers."<sup>28</sup>

As later noted by William R. Plum in his history of Lombard:

"...our early settlers were largely Eastern people—many being Methodists, which church, more than any other, produced opponents of slavery of the most aggressive types. Among them were Sheldon Peck, a Methodist from Vermont and an artist by profession, as well as a sign painter and much interested in the temperance cause."<sup>29</sup>

"Deacon" Winslow Churchill provided the Babcock's Grove area with a Methodist minister from its very beginning. He formed a Sunday school in his own home and preached in the blacksmith's shop until a church was built in 1839 opposite Stacy's Tavern.<sup>30</sup> After the arrival of the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad in 1849, many new denominations arrived, including Baptists and Congregationalists. Some of these newcomers built churches in town. But for several decades churches continued to meet cooperatively. As late as 1866 the newly-formed First Church of Babcock's Grove encompassed six Protestant denominations.<sup>31</sup> Following the death of Deacon Winslow in 1847 the church in the old settlement to the north of the town center became a "preaching station."<sup>32</sup> Sheldon and Harriet Peck continued to be active participants in local church life, although Sheldon eventually split with the church over its leniency on the subject of abolition. Their son Frank later noted that he had been "thoroughly trained in Sunday school and could recite very many verses that my sister Susan had taught me."<sup>33</sup>

The Peck family was deeply involved with the temperance movement that was such an important part of the Methodist creed. Their son Frank later remembered that "many of our first citizens were on the side of temperance."<sup>34</sup> Harriet was known to speak out against alcohol use and the family sponsored "temperance picnics at the Grove" in the 1850s. Picnickers could take the train to Babcock's Grove and spend the day alcohol-free in the fresh air of the country.<sup>35</sup> In addition, Sheldon helped to organize a temperance meeting at the old school on his property in 1852. This meeting was attended by his son Charles, Zebina Eastman (editor of the *Western Citizen*

<sup>27</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (1972), p. 436-7.

<sup>28</sup> Ahlstrom, p. 437.

<sup>29</sup> *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Du Page County* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1913).

<sup>30</sup> Budd, p.38.

<sup>31</sup> Budd, p. 57.

<sup>32</sup> Budd, p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, p.2.

<sup>34</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, p.5.

<sup>35</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6/30/1855.



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newspaper and noted abolitionist), Thomas Filer (whose home was an Underground Railroad station) and several ministers.<sup>36</sup> Peck also hosted well-known temperance speaker Johnny Jones in his home.<sup>37</sup> Jones was a free-born mulatto and successful businessman from Chicago who was a good friend of John Brown. Jones not only was a speaker but also financed anti-slavery activity in Chicago. It is hard for us today to imagine how radical it was for Peck to invite a mulatto into his home, let alone to have him speak publicly.

Both temperance and abolition were reported on in Zebina Eastman's newspaper the *Western Citizen*. The newspaper was created to provide a vehicle for disseminating information on temperance, abolition and the anti-slavery Liberty Party. It is through the *Western Citizen* that we are able to track much of the community and political activity of Sheldon Peck and his older sons during the late 1840s and 1850s.

The rigid structure and strict morality of the Methodist church made a split over the issue of slavery inevitable.<sup>38</sup> As it expanded into the south during the 1820s and '30s Methodism had modified its original anti-slavery stance in order to accommodate both ministers and parishioners who were slave owners. Unhappy over the church's stance on slavery, individual groups began to secede from the Methodist church starting in 1841, actions which built to a confrontation at the General Conference in 1844.<sup>39</sup> After two weeks of intense debate, it was agreed to split the church into northern and southern divisions. The South went quietly, but the North was anything but satisfied with this solution. An acrimonious period ensued with the North continuing to complain loudly and bitterly. Eventually legal action was taken by the south to obtain its share of the church's profitable publishing business. This dispute within the Methodist church would rage on right through the Civil War and Reconstruction.<sup>40</sup> Notably, it is during the 1840s that Peck's attendance at church begins to drop off. In 1847 he was removed from the rolls of the Methodist Church entirely.<sup>41</sup>

### **Abolition and the Liberty Party**

Harriet & Sheldon Peck had grown up in places where slavery was not only non-existent, but where it was also very distant. The Pecks lived in areas of both Vermont and New York that had been deeply affected by the evangelical movements of both the 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century.<sup>42</sup> So great was the evangelicalism in these areas that they became known as "the burned-over district." Anti-slavery activity took root in Vermont and New York early in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, with proximity to the Canadian border providing the necessary route for fugitive slaves and their helpers. Thanks to the moral stand of the Methodist church, the burned over district in New York—which the Pecks lived in the heart of—"seized leadership in the abolition crusade."<sup>43</sup>

When the Pecks arrived in Illinois in 1836 the state was deeply divided over the issue of slavery and bordered on two sides by slave-holding Kentucky and Missouri. The Pecks' arrival coincided with an explosion of anti-slavery activity in Illinois following the creation of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 and the assassination of Alton, Illinois abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy in 1837.<sup>44</sup> Thirty-seven anti-slavery societies were formed in Illinois in 1836 and 1837 including a statewide organization and a women's organization.<sup>45</sup> The Chicago area was an "anti-slavery hub" and DuPage County would grow to be essential to the anti-slavery network, including providing numerous stations for the Underground Railroad.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *The Western Citizen*, "Temperance Meeting at Babcock's Grove," 3/6/1852.

<sup>37</sup> *New York Times* (8/11/1856) "Illinois State Abolition Convention-An Electoral Ticket Nominated." For these and many of the other references related to abolitionism I am indebted to the tireless researchers at the Lombard Historical Society.

<sup>38</sup> Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (1972), p. 661.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 662.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 663.

<sup>41</sup> See materials prepared by the Lombard Historical Society on the Underground Railroad at the Peck House.

<sup>42</sup> P. Jeffrey Potash, *Vermont's Burned-Over District: Patterns of Community Development and Religious Activity 1761-1850*. (Chicago: Studies in the History of American Religion, Vol. 16) (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*.

<sup>44</sup> Glennette Tilley Turner, *The Underground Railroad in Illinois* (2001), p.16.

<sup>45</sup> Turner, p.34.

<sup>46</sup> Evidence suggests that Kane, DuPage and Will counties took the lead in anti-slavery activities in Illinois, with their delegates to the Liberty Party greatly outnumbering all other counties. *Western Citizen*, 2/1/1844. It is probably not coincidental that Methodists had a strong presence in all three of these counties starting in the 1830s.

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The level of Peck's involvement in anti-slavery activities can be judged by his early political participation in anti-slavery activities. Peck was a DuPage County delegate to the anti-slavery Liberty Party in the 1840s. The Liberty Party was formed by abolitionists during the 1830s in opposition to William Lloyd Garrison's stance that the Constitution was flawed, could not be fixed and, therefore, the North should secede from the Union.<sup>47</sup> The abolitionists who formed the Liberty Party believed that it was through the election of abolitionists that laws to outlaw slavery would at last be passed. The first national convention of the Liberty Party was held in 1840 near Albany, New York. At the convention they nominated James G. Birney as their presidential candidate. Birney was nominated again at the 1844 convention held in Buffalo, New York. At this convention the Liberty Party adopted a 21-point platform which makes clear the religious roots of their anti-slavery fervor and their belief that they were, in fact, the upholders of the true ideals of the Founding Fathers and the original constitution.<sup>48</sup> The first plank of the platform states:

*"Resolved, That human brotherhood is a cardinal principle of true democracy, as well as of pure Christianity, which spurns all inconsistent limitations; and neither the political party which repudiates it, nor the political system which is not based upon it, can be truly democratic or permanent."*

In their fourth plank the Liberty Party pledged to "carry out the principle of equal rights into all its practical consequences and applications..." Although the Liberty Party never garnered large numbers of votes, many historians believe that the votes it attracted in upstate New York in 1844 caused Henry Clay to lose the presidential election that year.

With its strong stance against slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law and a belief in the fundamental equality of all men, the Liberty Party immediately attracted the interest of Sheldon Peck.<sup>49</sup>

Sheldon Peck and his neighbors, with their network of friends and family in upstate New York, were almost certainly aware of the Liberty Party as soon (if not sooner) as it began to be discussed in the press in late 1839. According to Illinois Underground Railroad expert Glennette Tilley Turner, by 1842 the center of slavery activity had shifted west to northern Illinois.<sup>50</sup> This shift attracted Zebina Eastman here from Vermont to begin publication of the anti-slavery newspaper *Western Citizen* in 1842.<sup>51</sup> Sheldon Peck was to become an important distributor of this paper in DuPage County and possibly elsewhere.<sup>52</sup>

Eastman was an evangelist in the anti-slavery cause. He felt that abolitionists were fulfilling the mission of Christ on Earth by advocating for the freedom that the Constitution guaranteed. In Eastman's view, slavery needed to be judged "by the test of human nature, reason and common sense."<sup>53</sup> He was certain that the Founding Fathers "meant that their liberty should extend to the emancipation of the slaves..."<sup>54</sup> He resented the political and military dominance of the Southern gentry that had not only kept slavery alive, but had extended it into the Northwest Territory. Eastman was enormously influential in Illinois and it is clear that he and Sheldon Peck were in close communication during the 1840s and '50s.

The activities of the Liberty Party were covered extensively in Eastman's *Western Citizen*. By early 1844 Sheldon Peck is recorded as a DuPage County delegate to the Illinois Liberty Party convention.<sup>55</sup> In addition to Peck, DuPage County was represented by his neighbors Thomas and J. W. Filer, A.E. Carpenter and by J.P. Blodgett of Downers Grove. The Filers and Blodgett would become station operators on the Underground Railroad. Several more times during 1844 and 1845 Peck's activities on behalf of the Liberty Party are noted in the *Western Citizen*. At the 1844 state convention the party decided that "the circulation of tracts, and the

<sup>47</sup> For this and much of the following information on the Liberty Party, please see <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=920>, "Liberty Party."

<sup>48</sup> <http://ww2.volstate.edu/socialscience/FinalDocs/Jacksonian/liberty.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, in the town of Jordan, NY where the Pecks lived from 1828-1836, there is a "Liberty Street" in the heart of the village.

<sup>50</sup> Turner, p. 105.

<sup>51</sup> *Western Citizen* was published until 1853. Eastman became a diplomat briefly after the Civil War, returning to the Chicago area in 1873. Turner, p.105.

<sup>52</sup> He is noted as having taken 33 copies of the paper for resale in early May 1847. *Western Citizen*, 5/1847.

<sup>53</sup> Zebina Eastman, *Slavery a Falling Tower: A Lecture on Slavery, the cause of the Civil War in the United States, Delivered at Arley Chapel, Bristol, June 1862*. (Chicago: John R. Walsh), p.5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p.8.

<sup>55</sup> *Western Citizen*, 2/1/1844. DuPage County had 23 delegates, 2<sup>nd</sup> only to Kane County's 47.

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employment of lecturers" would help them to spread the word.<sup>56</sup> They also encouraged readers of the *Western Citizen* to donate money to the cause in hopes of raising \$3000 to support the work of three field "agents" who would distribute the tracts.

For Sheldon Peck, his activity with the Liberty Party on behalf of the anti-slavery movement was not to end at his attendance of meetings. He would sponsor speakers and meetings of the DuPage County Anti-Slavery Society and continued to be active in the anti-slavery movement throughout the 1840s and 1850s. A lecturer known to have spoken at the Peck house is H. Ford Douglass, an escaped slave and friend of Frederick Douglass.<sup>57</sup> A great orator and a brilliant mind, Douglass promoted racial equality.<sup>58</sup> Peck himself was a speaker on abolition, with at least two instances recorded locally. Hiram Leonard of Warrenville records in his diary "Went to hear Peck speake [sic] in the evening at the meeting house on abolitionism, the Painter Peck."<sup>59</sup> Leonard also noted that Peck came to speak in Warrenville in March 1844.<sup>60</sup> By 1856 Sheldon Peck was considered a "radical abolitionist,"<sup>61</sup> not only promoting racial equality but also risking imprisonment and steep fines to shelter runaway slaves on his property. He is listed on the slate of delegates for the Illinois Radical Abolitionist Society at a meeting that took place on July 31<sup>st</sup> of that year.<sup>62</sup> By this time Peck's two oldest sons, John and Charles had also become deeply involved in the anti-slavery movement.<sup>63</sup>

### The Underground Railroad

The Ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slave ownership in the Northwest Territory, resulted in an ideological and geographical line being drawn between the North and the South. This line was cemented by the first Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. Tensions between the North and the South increased exponentially during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. During this time conditions for the slaves deteriorated: the labor-intensive crop of cotton was introduced in the South and became a source of vast wealth for Southern land-owning families. The hard work of slaves became essential to the production of cotton, greatly increasing their value as property. As slaves were increasingly bought and sold like commodities, families were broken up and moved more deeply into the south where the largest cotton plantations were. These frightening developments made slaves even more determined and desperate to gain their freedom. Fugitive slaves had been an issue since before the Revolutionary War, but the desire to escape bondage became ever more urgent during the decades leading up to the Civil War.

Although a context study has been done for the Underground Railroad, there are still few documented sites that have been listed on the National Register or as National Historic Landmarks.<sup>64</sup> Because Underground Railroad activities were illegal, those who were involved were secretive and left little documentation behind. Finding and substantiating the existence of Underground Railroad activity continues to be a challenge for historians. It is this rarity that makes the Sheldon Peck House so important.

Sheldon Peck had lived in sections of both Vermont and New York that were important paths for fugitive slaves.<sup>65</sup> Rokeby, a National Historic Landmark, is a well-documented stop on the Underground Railroad in Ferrisburgh, VT, less than 20 miles north of Peck's town of Bridport. Rokeby was lived in by the Robinson family from the 1790s until 1961. The Robinsons were Quakers and, like the Pecks, they were sheep farmers. Rokeby was originally a clapboard sided upright-and-wing house like the Peck's house in Illinois. The Robinson family's active participation in the Underground Railroad is documented by over 10,000 surviving family documents, providing historians a rare glimpse into the workings of this important network.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Chicago Press and Tribune* (10/3/1859), "Anti-Slavery Meetings."

<sup>58</sup> Most abolitionists were not in favor of racial equality. In the 1840s this stance would have put one on the side of "radical abolitionists."

<sup>59</sup> *Diary of Hiram Leonard*, Warrenville Historical Society manuscript, 2/17/1846.

<sup>60</sup> Leonard, 3/8/1844.

<sup>61</sup> *New York Times* (8/11/1856) "Illinois State Abolition Convention-An Electoral Ticket Nominated." For these and many of the other references related to abolitionism I am indebted to the tireless researchers at the Lombard Historical Society.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Western Citizen*, 10/5/1853. By 1845 John was 21 and Charles was 18.

<sup>64</sup> National Park Service, *Underground Railroad Resources in the U.S. Theme Study*.

<sup>65</sup> Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad: From Slavery to Freedom*. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2006), see map between pages 112 and 113. Also, text on p.17



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The John Brown Farm and Gravesite in Lake Placid, New York, another National Historic Landmark associated with the Underground Railroad, lies far north of the Erie Canal region where Sheldon Peck lived.

In Illinois there are at least three houses associated with the Underground Railroad that are listed on the National Register: the John Hossack House (Ottawa), the Owen Lovejoy House (Princeton) and the Dr. Richard Eels House (Quincy). Only the Lovejoy House and the Eels House were built in the 1830s like the Peck House. Lovejoy, like Peck, moved to Illinois from New England. As a minister Lovejoy was well-educated. He spoke openly against slavery from the pulpit as well as in his brother's Alton, Illinois, newspaper. He ran successfully for elected office and continued his tirades against slavery while in the U.S. House of Representatives. Dr. Eels lived in Quincy, the first Underground Railroad stop across the Mississippi River from the slave state of Missouri. Eels became president of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Party in 1843 and he was a candidate for the national Liberty Party in 1844. Both of these men had very public anti-slavery platforms. Sheldon Peck's life as an itinerant painter gave him a different, but very effective way to spread the anti-slavery message.

Wilbur Siebert, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century historian of the Underground Railroad who was able to interview numerous conductors, station operators and former fugitives, notes the importance of the westward migration of people from New England and New York. It was migrants from these areas who carried the anti-slavery cause and the Underground Railroad operation to northern and western Illinois. Sheldon Peck, as a traveling portrait painter, was one of these message-carrying migrants.

Because southern and western Illinois were so sharply divided on the question of slavery, runaways needed to penetrate deeply into the state when seeking safe haven. DuPage County has been called "the last mile" on the Underground Railroad since runaway slaves were close to safety once they reached the valleys of the Fox and Des Plaines Rivers. Runaways could take a boat or train from Chicago to Michigan and thence to Canada.<sup>66</sup> Most runaway slaves in Illinois came from Missouri. West of Chicago, Elgin, Aurora, Downers Grove, Babcock's Grove and Brush Hill (later Hinsdale & Oak Brook) all are known to have had stations on the Underground Railroad.<sup>67</sup> Sheldon Peck was well acquainted with the conductors in all of these towns, with the exception of Brush Hill. In Babcock's Grove both Peck and his good friend Thomas Filer, whose home was on the west side of the river, provided shelter to runaway slaves. In both cases, local and family lore has been verified by both physical evidence (Filer's house had a false wall and a tunnel to the barn) and eyewitness accounts (Peck's youngest son Frank carried vivid memories of these slaves well into his old age). Both Filer and Peck lived close to the railroad and to St. Charles Road and, as long-time settlers in the area, would have known their way around the back roads and paths.

Frank Peck was born in 1853 and would have been a very young child during the years leading up to the Civil War. In his memoir, written in 1929, he says, "In the days of the underground railroad our home was a depot and very many were the slaves sheltered here while on their way to freedom."<sup>68</sup> Many times in his old age Frank Peck would tell the story of a night during his childhood when seven slaves were sheltered at the family farm.<sup>69</sup> These remembrances were always consistent and included his memory of a slave named "old Charley," a man who appears in other Illinois accounts of runaway slaves. Frank Peck recalled that the slaves were "hid in barns around the homestead." Frank also recalled listening to the slaves singing beautiful songs in the evening. The abolitionists and the Underground Railroad had a powerful network in northern Illinois in which Sheldon and Harriet Peck were key players.<sup>70</sup>

The depth of Peck's involvement with the anti-slavery movement can clearly be traced through his painting career as well. Many of the sitters for his portraits, both in New York and in Illinois, were well-known abolitionists. Since he usually boarded with the family of his subject when he was painting a portrait, no doubt the anti-slavery network helped him to make contacts with potential customers.

<sup>66</sup> Charles Volney Dyer, the head of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad that ran through Hinsdale and Downers Grove, was known to be an anti-slavery sympathizer. The day after the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850 he provided chartered trains to take slaves to Canada. Turner, p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> Only Graue Mill, the Underground Railroad Station in Oak Brook, is listed on the National Register.

<sup>68</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Lombard Spectator*, 9/3/1931 "Lombard's Oldest Born Citizen Busy on 'Reminiscences.'" It is said that Harriet Peck participated in sewing groups that made clothes for the fugitives.

<sup>70</sup> It is interesting to note that runaway slaves were often taken to the Tremont Hotel in Chicago, across the street from the studio kept by Sheldon Peck in the 1850s.



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**Itinerant Artist: Sheldon Peck**

Sheldon Peck's importance is multi-fold. Yet it is for his role as an itinerant portrait painter that he is most well-known today. Before the introduction of photography in the 1840s families who wanted affordable likenesses made engaged the services of an itinerant portrait painter. These men traveled from place to place either in a wagon or on horseback with the canvas, brushes and paints that were necessary to ply their trade. Like many other rural tradesmen, they would live with their customers while they were working. Their ability to tell a good story and carry the news from place to place while plying their trade gave them a unique place in rural communities. Given Peck's high level of involvement with a variety of issues, it seems likely that he was an interesting guest and a good story teller. Indeed, Peck's speaking abilities were well-remembered by his son Frank, who later noted that Sheldon was "generally the speaker of the day" for Fourth of July festivities in Babcock's Grove.<sup>71</sup>

In return for a portrait, the itinerant artist would receive cash or goods. Peck is reported to have received "\$50 plus board and keep for himself and his horse" for a double portrait.<sup>72</sup> In another case, he received a horse valued at \$50 in payment for a family portrait.<sup>73</sup> The 1820s and '30s were busy times for itinerant artists, with an expanding middle class and the desire for decorative objects for the home. Portraits gave people respectability and beauty at the same time and these paintings were greatly in demand.

According to remembrances of his children, Peck would leave home after the harvest was in, taking to the road to paint portraits.<sup>74</sup> Sometimes he would be gone for months, ranging as far from home as Pekin, Illinois, on the Illinois River and Macoupin County, northeast of St. Louis.<sup>75</sup> Frank Peck says: "My father was a traveling man and his business called him away from home and after a long stay away he made us a surprise visit ... I was then a small child and was sitting on the floor and he handed me a package of candy and to Mother a large roll of bills that he took from his old leather bill fold which I remember well."<sup>76</sup>

It is not known if Peck received any formal training or training from another artist, but his first recorded portrait was done in Vermont in 1820 when he was just 23 years old. It is a double portrait of his mother and father, Elizabeth and Jacob Peck. Sheldon Peck is known for the direct gaze, dour expressions and sharp facial angles of his sitters. Like many self-taught artists, his mastery of perspective was poor. But Peck was adept at including details that might identify the interests of his sitters. He is considered to be one of the most technically skilled American folk painters.<sup>77</sup> His recognizable style, brilliant colors and highly-finished surfaces place him in the upper echelon of American folk art.

Over the course of his long career (1820-1845), Peck was a highly productive painter, adapting his style and his materials to the new conditions in both New York and Illinois and capitalizing on his many connections amongst abolitionists and founding families of Chicago and the communities of DuPage and nearby Kane counties.<sup>78</sup> At least fifty-two paintings can be attributed to him. Like many folk artists, he usually did not sign his work, so it is through his style, his sitters and family histories that Peck's paintings have been identified.

Following his marriage to Harriet and the births of their first two children, Sheldon Peck moved to the canal town of Jordan, New York, in 1828. The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, made travel for itinerant artists and traders of every sort much easier.<sup>79</sup> It enabled them to traverse vast areas of New York countryside as well as the cities of the Mohawk River valley and western New York.<sup>80</sup> During the eight years he lived in New York, Peck executed at least 40 portraits. All of his New York portraits were done on wood panel. His

<sup>71</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, p.2. At these same festivities Thomas Filer would amaze the crowds by reciting the Declaration of Independence from memory.

<sup>72</sup> Betty I. Madden, *Arts, Crafts & Architecture in Early Illinois*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974).

<sup>73</sup> This information is related to a series of notes in the Lombard Historical Society archives on the Wagner Family portrait, done by Peck in Aurora, Illinois in 1845. This portrait is his most ambitious work identified to date.

<sup>74</sup> Peck is known to have been on the road during the summertime as well.

<sup>75</sup> 1850 federal census. York Township, DuPage County, Roll M 432-105, p.80A (9/1850) and Pekin, Tazewell County, Roll M 432-129, p.124B (12/1850).

<sup>76</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, p.2.

<sup>77</sup> Richard Miller, "Six Illinois Portraits Attributed to Sheldon Peck," *The Magazine Antiques* (1984), pp. 614-617.

<sup>78</sup> For additional information on the evolution of his style from Vermont to New York and Illinois, see Marianne E. Balazs, *Checklist of works attributed to Sheldon Peck* (XXXX).

<sup>79</sup> Paul S. D'Ambrosio, "The Erie Canal and New York State Folk Art," *The Magazine Antiques* (April 1999), pp.596-603.

<sup>80</sup> Paul S. D'Ambrosio, "The Erie Canal and New York State Folk Art," *The Magazine Antiques* (4/1999), pp.596-603.

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subjects ranged from family elders, husband and wife, children and occasionally siblings or a parent and child. While in New York Peck's style evolved to include more personal adornments as well as settings for his sitters that included chairs and drapery. He also brightened and intensified his color palette.

Upon arriving in Chicago in the fall of 1836, Peck immediately set to work, executing four known portraits in 1837 and several more in 1838. Once he arrived in Illinois he switched from wood panel to canvas, a medium that was both more readily available on the prairie and easier to transport. His 1837 paintings include important early Chicago citizens William and Phebe Welch.<sup>81</sup> No portraits have been identified from 1839, probably because Peck was busy getting settled and building his house and barn in Babcock's Grove. But 1840 was an exceptionally productive year, with five known portraits, including Mercy Dodge Churchill of Babcock's Grove. (Her husband, Winslow Churchill, sat for his portrait in New York in 1830.)

In 1845, apparently in response to competition from daguerreotypes, Peck undertook a series of ambitious portraits of Elgin-area residents. Peck's new style included a large, horizontal format with groups of full-length figures in settings with furniture, vases of flowers and other details. These large portraits included trompe l'oeil mahogany frames painted directly on the canvas.<sup>82</sup> The size of the portrait, the size of the figures and the settings in these paintings would not have been possible in a daguerreotype. The fancy grain-painted "frames" were an extra bonus.

At least eleven of Sheldon Peck's Illinois portraits were of people who are known to have been involved in the anti-slavery movement. He spent a considerable amount of time in Aurora in 1845, a hotbed of anti-slavery activity, painting both individuals and family groups. All of his Aurora sitters were known abolitionists and many were members of the large and active Kane County Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>83</sup>

While in Aurora in 1845 Peck painted Daniel and Selina Bloss, David and Catherine Stolp Crane, Bailey Hobson and his wife Clarissa Hobson and Mr. and Mrs. William Vaughan. When the Vaughan portrait came up for auction in 2001 it was described as "an important work by a major American artist, unencumbered by the artistic conventions and sentimentalities of its time, the painting transcends the boundaries of traditional American Folk Art."<sup>84</sup>

Of his other Aurora portraits of 1845 the following information is known:

- The Bloss family bought their farm from abolitionist David McKee.
- The Stolp family was not only abolitionist, but they had a carding mill in Aurora where the Pecks would have taken the Merino wool that they raised to be processed.

Peck may also have painted his portrait of the John J. Wagner family that winter of 1845. In Peck's portrait, Wagner is holding a copy of the *Western Citizen*. Wagner's home was a station on the Underground Railroad. Peck also traveled up the Fox River valley to Geneva to paint a miniature of Dr. Israel S. P. Lord.<sup>85</sup>

Peck painted abolitionists in Elgin as well, another important center of anti-slavery activity. His c.1840 portraits of Laura Raymond Gifford and James T. Gifford depict the sister-in-law and brother of Hezekiah Gifford, a known member of the Kane County Anti-Slavery Society. James Gifford was on the state central committee of the Liberty Party. Mr. and Mrs. Gifford were also associated by marriage with Dr. Charles Dyer, a leader of the anti-slavery movement in Chicago.

In 1849 and 1850 Peck traveled to western Illinois, possibly spending the winter there painting portraits and promoting abolitionism. He is recorded twice in the United States census that year: once in Babcock's Grove and three months later in Pekin, on the Illinois River, in the home of William Tharp.<sup>86</sup> Peck is known to have painted at least three portraits in 1849 in Macoupin County, across the

<sup>81</sup> These two portraits are in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>82</sup> *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art*.

<sup>83</sup> For this and other information on Peck's sitters I am indebted to the Lombard Historical Society.

<sup>84</sup> [www.sothebys.com](http://www.sothebys.com), "Sotheby's Sale of American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture to take place on November 28, 2001 Featuring a Rare, Large-Scale Portrait by Sheldon Peck..."

<sup>85</sup> Few Peck miniatures have been identified, although it is known that he worked in this medium

<sup>86</sup> 1850 federal census. York Township, DuPage County, Roll M 432-105, p.80A (9/1850) and Pekin, Tazewell County, Roll M 432-129, p.124B (12/1850).

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river from St. Louis.<sup>87</sup> There are reports that he wintered in or near St. Louis which may be supported by the evidence of his time in Pekin and Macoupin County during the winters of 1849-50 and 1850-1851.

Although there are no known Peck portraits after 1849, he must have continued to paint in some fashion, perhaps as a decorator of furniture. He is recorded as a "decorative painter" with a studio at 71 Lake Street, Chicago, in the winter of 1854-55.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps this description is an indication of what his early training was in Vermont. In the 1860 census Peck is listed simply as "artist" rather than the "portrait painter" of early decades.

By 1855 Sheldon Peck was 58 years old. His third son, George, had married the year before and his two oldest sons, John and Charles, had been busy with their own enterprises since 1849. John would marry in 1858 and Martha, Susan, Henry and Charles would all marry between 1861 and 1866. Peck died of pneumonia in March of 1868. Given Sheldon Peck's age in 1855 and the overwhelming success and availability of portrait photography (by 1855 the price of a daguerreotype had dropped from \$2.50 to \$.12), it seems likely that his portrait painting career was over prior to the Civil War.

Many of the sitters in Peck's portraits remain unidentified today, although most paintings can be roughly dated based on their style and medium. Previously-unknown Sheldon Peck portraits continue to surface and are readily identifiable thanks to his distinct style. Peck has a solid place in the pantheon of itinerant painters in America.

### **Sheldon Peck's Place in the History of Folk Art**

Folk art was first recognized by art collectors in the 1920s as "a central contribution to the mainstream of American culture in the formative years of our democracy."<sup>89</sup> Of the early collections, only that of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller survives intact. It is installed in its own museum at Colonial Williamsburg. It was Rockefeller who was responsible for the first exhibition of American folk art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932.<sup>90</sup>

Today, most major museums have some small folk art holdings. There are major collections at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, NY, the Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, VT and the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City. All of these major collections own multiple examples of Sheldon Peck's work and he has been an acknowledged member of the top tier of folk artists since his unsigned work was first identified in the 1930s. Although many examples of Peck's work have since been identified, Peck portraits continue to turn up.

Itinerant portrait painters share a few common characteristics: they usually have no formal training, their paintings are simple, their subjects are usually rural and often they carry out other decorative painting work—such as chairs and tables—to help support themselves. Typically itinerant painters live on the economic margins of society: their movements range over a wide area and keep them away from home for weeks or months at a time.<sup>91</sup> It is only through painstaking research that these movements can be traced. We still have only a sketchy idea of where Sheldon Peck traveled in Illinois, and no documentation for portrait locations during his time in New York.

Of the small number of identified folk artists, few were prosperous enough to own a house and land. Because of their peripatetic existence there are no houses that can be identified today as having been the long-term residence of a folk painter. There are no National Register listings in Vermont, New York, or Illinois, nor in any of the other New England states where itinerant painters are known to have worked.<sup>92</sup> Because of this, the Sheldon Peck House is an important documented residence of an itinerant painter.

<sup>87</sup> These portraits were of Ross Houck and his wife (name unknown) and George Weld Hilliard. See letter from Richard Miller in the Lombard Historical Society archives, n.d.

<sup>88</sup> *Chicago Directory* (1854).

<sup>89</sup> Jean Lipman & Alice Winchester, *The Flowering of American Folk Art, 1776-1876*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>90</sup> Peck's work was included in this first folk art exhibition, as it has been in all subsequent major folk art shows.

<sup>91</sup> Ammi Phillips, a contemporary of Peck's who was based in Troy, New York, is known to have traveled throughout a 200-mile long area along the New York-Massachusetts-Connecticut border. Mary Black & Jean Lipman, *American Folk Painting*. (New York, Bramhall House, 1987), p. 52.

<sup>92</sup> A search of the National Register database as well as email communications with numerous historians who have worked in the areas where itinerant portrait painters were active have turned up no recognized sites that can be associated with Peck's peers.



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Itinerant portrait painting was common between the American Revolution and 1845. Following the invention of photography and its introduction to the United States in the early 1840s these simple portraits were quickly replaced by the new medium and painters, including Peck, soon found themselves out of work.

### Later History

Following Sheldon Peck's death in March 1868, Harriet, 60, and her youngest son Frank, then 15, continued to live on at the farm. The following year Babcock's Grove incorporated under the name "Lombard." By this time DuPage County had a population of over 16,000, with nearly 1800 living in York Township, along with the Pecks.<sup>93</sup> Chicago was a booming metropolis of a quarter of a million people.

The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 was to accelerate the development of the suburbs. Thanks to the easy access provided by commuter trains, Lombard and its neighboring communities would experience renewed growth in the two decades following Chicago's fire. Glen Ellyn, with its large man-made lake, became a resort town. Wheaton, which had wrested the honor of being the county seat away from Naperville in 1867, was also the home of thriving Wheaton College (a center of anti-slavery activity prior to the Civil War).

Although it too was growing, Lombard remained compact, with considerable farmland and small industry on its edges.<sup>94</sup> Lombard's population reached just 590 in 1900. Electricity, the telephone, city water and sewer all were introduced prior to the turn of the century, but only in the town center. Tracks for an interurban electric railroad, the Chicago, Aurora & Elgin, were laid south of the Pecks' property in 1902.<sup>95</sup> The town was incorporated as a village in 1903. Despite these developments the Peck homestead remained on the edge of town for another twenty years.

Harriet Peck's long life came to an end in April 1889. Following her death each of the ten surviving children received an equal share of the estate. The house and farm were rented out, but gradually Frank Peck, the youngest of the ten children, purchased his siblings' shares of the estate. In 1895 he returned to live in the house and run the farm.

In 1910 Frank and his second wife Ida undertook a major renovation to modernize the house and accommodate their growing family. Married in 1897, they would eventually have seven children, five of whom lived to adulthood. For the first time in the house's long history, renovation altered the appearance of the 1839 homestead. Frank documents this remodeling in the memoir he wrote in 1929 when he was 76.<sup>96</sup> The house was jacked up and the west room was removed. The east room was "improved," including the addition of a linoleum floor over the old planks. A second story was added to the original block. The entire house was stuccoed and low stone columns were installed at the back entrance to the kitchen and across the front. Some new windows were installed and the front porch was removed.

In 1926, at the age of 73, Frank decided to sell the last of the farm land south of the house. The Peck farmstead had recently been annexed into the town of Lombard. The Peck land was soon subdivided into an area called "Cambridge Manor," with small bungalows and Colonial Revival houses rapidly filling the lots.<sup>97</sup> With the money from the sale of his land, Peck enclosed the back porch and installed electricity and running water in the house, 89 years after its construction.<sup>98</sup>

Frank Peck died in 1947 at the age of 94, leaving the house to his youngest daughter, Alyce Mertz. Alyce's son Allen donated the home, but not the land, to the Lombard Historical Society upon his retirement in 1996. The Village of Lombard subsequently purchased the land in order to keep the house on its original site and restore it to its appearance in Sheldon Peck's lifetime: 1839-1868.

<sup>93</sup> Budd, p. 72.

<sup>94</sup> Budd, p.102. A brick factory, cheese factory and tannery were all part of Lombard's light industry in the late 1890s.

<sup>95</sup> Budd, p. 136.

<sup>96</sup> Frank Peck, *Memoir*, pp.10-11.

<sup>97</sup> Photographs from the 1910s show that by this time the largest portion of the original barn had been demolished, possibly as part of the 1910 house renovations. Photos of this period show a small barn with a ridgepole running north-south, which may be the south wing of the original barn, still standing. The iron boot scraper that stood in front of the barn door still exists in its original location, now the back yard of a house on S. Lombard Street.

<sup>98</sup> Information from Sheldon Peck descendant, Allen Mertz.



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The house still sits on a large lot—by far the largest in the neighborhood—overlooking the railroad tracks that were built on land purchased from Sheldon Peck in 1848.

Using donated funds, state grants and considerable volunteer labor, the house was returned to its 19<sup>th</sup>-century appearance, as it looked when Sheldon Peck lived there. With the involvement of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and preservation architect Jack Luer, Frank Peck's second floor was removed along with the 20<sup>th</sup>-century kitchen, bathroom, linoleum, stucco, stonework, casement windows and the c. 1928 rear enclosed porch. A new front porch and handicap ramp were installed on the north side.

The integrity of the Sheldon Peck House is remarkable considering its long occupation by a large and active family. Not only does the house remain on its original site but it also exhibits the original form, timber framing, plank walls, staircase, window and door openings and well. Today the house serves as a site for the teaching of Lombard's early history, the story of Sheldon Peck and his family and the importance of the Underground Railroad in DuPage County.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

The house was constructed in three stages: the center in 1839, the west wing c.1850 and the east wing c.1860. The west wing was demolished c.1910, but rebuilt 1996-1998 on the basis of archaeological and photographic evidence. For a full description of the house's evolution over time please see Section 8, Narrative.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**Primary**

Since the acquisition of the house by the Lombard Historical Society in 1996 there has been an incredible amount of archival research done by Historical Society staff and volunteers, resulting in a very detailed timeline for the house and its occupants and a notebook of information on Sheldon Peck's portraits and their sitters. This research continues today. The team includes: Jeanne S. Angel, Margo Fruehe, Patricia Poskocil and Rita Schneider. Their work and insight have been invaluable to this process.

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The Historical Society has collections which include photos, videos and documents related to the house and the family, as well as early Lombard history.

Given the close ties between Glen Ellyn and Lombard during their early history, materials at the Glen Ellyn Historical Society have also been helpful.

Sheldon Peck's travels took him to many places, so the archives of the Elgin Historical Society have been consulted for information on his portrait subjects and their abolition activities.

The Newberry Library has important early maps, records of land transactions between the federal government and Sheldon Peck and copies of the *Western Citizen*, an abolitionist newspaper published from 1847 to 1857 by Sheldon Peck's friend Zebina Eastman.

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<http://www2.volstate.edu/socialscience/FinalDocs/Jacksonian/liberty.htm> "Liberty Party 1844 Platform, Buffalo, New York, August 30, 1843," the 21-point Liberty Party platform.

<http://www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/articles/religious-revivals-and-revivalism-in-1830s-new-england> "Religious Revivals and Revivalism in 1830s New England."

<http://www.teachushistory.org/Temperance/forteachers.htm> "Temperance Reform in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century."

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other

Name of repository: Lombard Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

#### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 416309 4637940  
Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The North 195.4 feet of the East 198 feet (except the West 60 feet thereof) of Block 1 of Cambridge Manor, a Subdivision of the West half of Section 8 Township 39 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian in DuPage County, IL.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The existing 2/3 acre lot is the original house lot of the Sheldon Peck homestead.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jean A. Follett, Ph.D.  
organization Benjamin Historic Certifications date March 1, 2011  
street & number 711 Marion St. telephone 847-432-1865  
city or town Highland Park state IL zip code 60035  
e-mail jafollett@comcast.net

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County: State:

Photographer:



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Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of \_\_\_\_

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lombard Historical Society & Village of Lombard

street & number 23 W. Maple St. (LHS)/255 E. Wilson (VofL) telephone 630-629-1885/630-620-5700

city or town Lombard state IL zip code 60148

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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**List of Photographs**

**Exterior**

1. Sheldon Peck House, Overall view from East Parkside looking south to front elevation.
2. Sheldon Peck House, North (front) elevation.
3. Sheldon Peck House, Close-up of central block (1839), north (front) elevation.
4. Sheldon Peck House, Close-up of East wing (c.1860), north (front) elevation.
5. Sheldon Peck House, View from northwest, West wing (1996-8), west (side) elevation.
6. View from Sheldon Peck House West wing to Grace Street crossing of Chicago & North Western Railway tracks.
7. Sheldon Peck House, View from southeast, South (rear) elevation and yard showing non-contributing shed on left.
8. Sheldon Peck House, South (rear) elevation.
9. Sheldon Peck House, South (rear) elevation showing setback between West wing and central block.

**Interior**

10. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, front (north) room looking towards front door.
11. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, front (north) room looking into west wing.
12. Sheldon Peck House, ceiling joist with connection to summer beam showing broad axe marks, in front (north) room of Central block.
13. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, back (south) room, showing original window and plank wall on west.
14. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, stairs to attic showing original timber framing.
15. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, View to south window in attic.
16. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, showing roof plate and corner post in attic.
17. Sheldon Peck House, Central block, showing flared ends of tie beams in attic
18. Sheldon Peck House, East wing (c.1860), View to front (north) door.
19. Sheldon Peck House, Central block (1839), basement, rubble walls

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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20. Sheldon Peck House, Central block (1839), basement, original joists and sills with new reinforcing.
21. Sheldon Peck House, Central block (1839), basement, joist connection to original sill.
22. Sheldon Peck House, original exterior door (currently in use in an exhibit)



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Sheldon & Harriet Peck in front of the front (north) door  
of the East wing, c. 1865.



Sheldon Peck c.1850

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Sheldon Peck House before 1910, taken from the northwest.



Sheldon Peck House before 1910, taken from the northwest.

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Rear of Sheldon Peck House, c.1910, taken from the southeast.  
Showing West wing removed, roof raised on center block,  
new windows and stucco.



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South (rear) elevation of Sheldon Peck House, c.1996.



Sheldon Peck House, Central block and East wing from the northeast, c.1996, showing plank walls, original window and door openings and salvaged lumber used to patch around the replacement windows. Also shows 1920s east wall of East wing, created when the wing was shortened to accommodate Grace Street.

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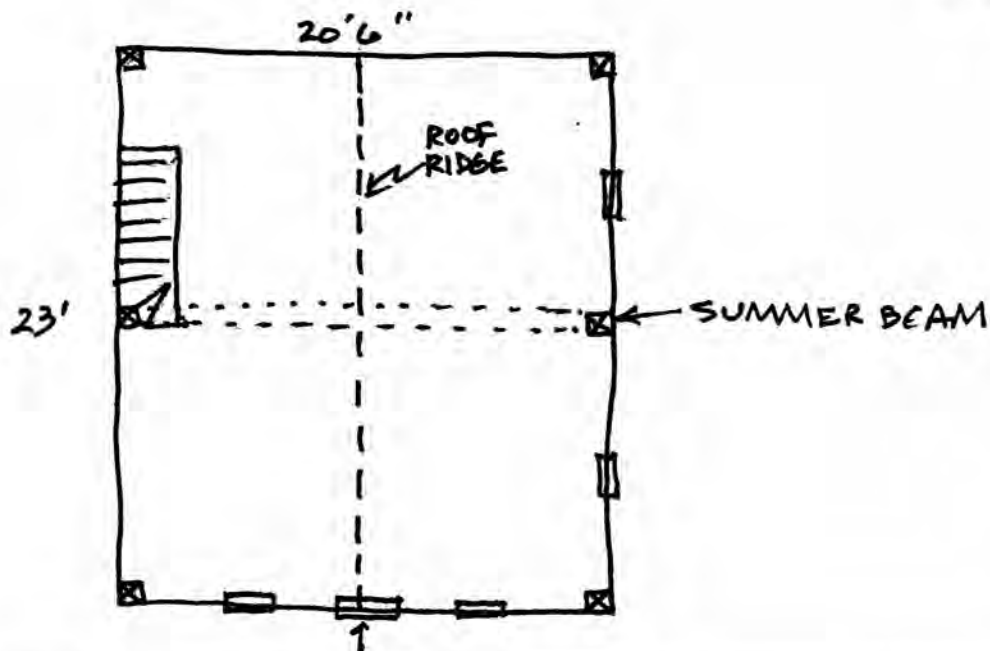
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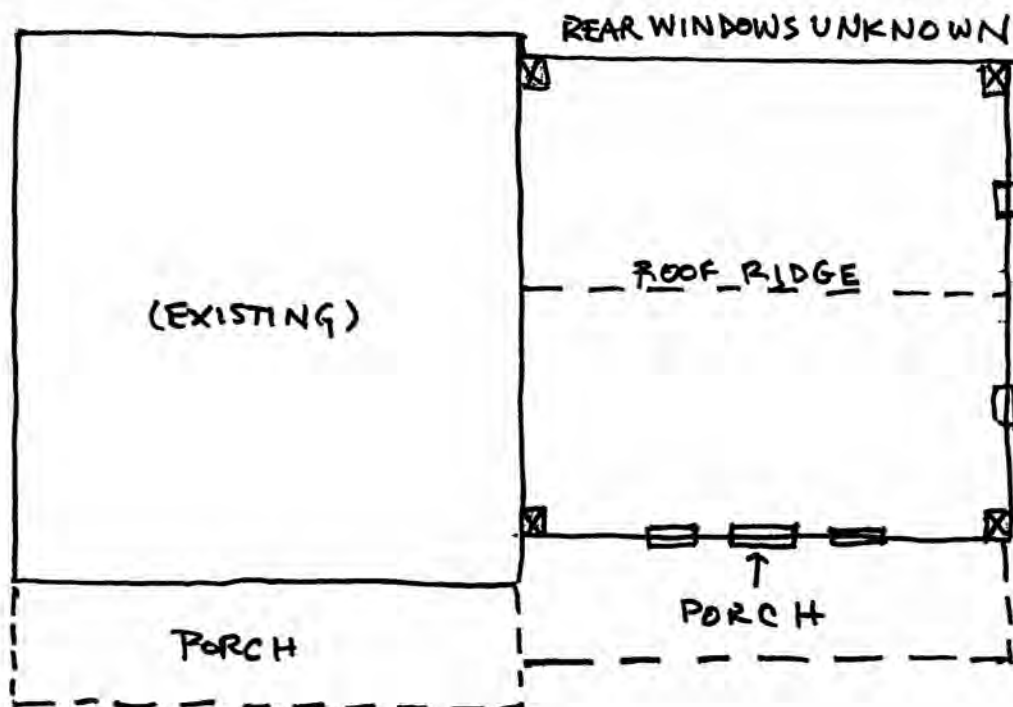
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1839



C. 1848



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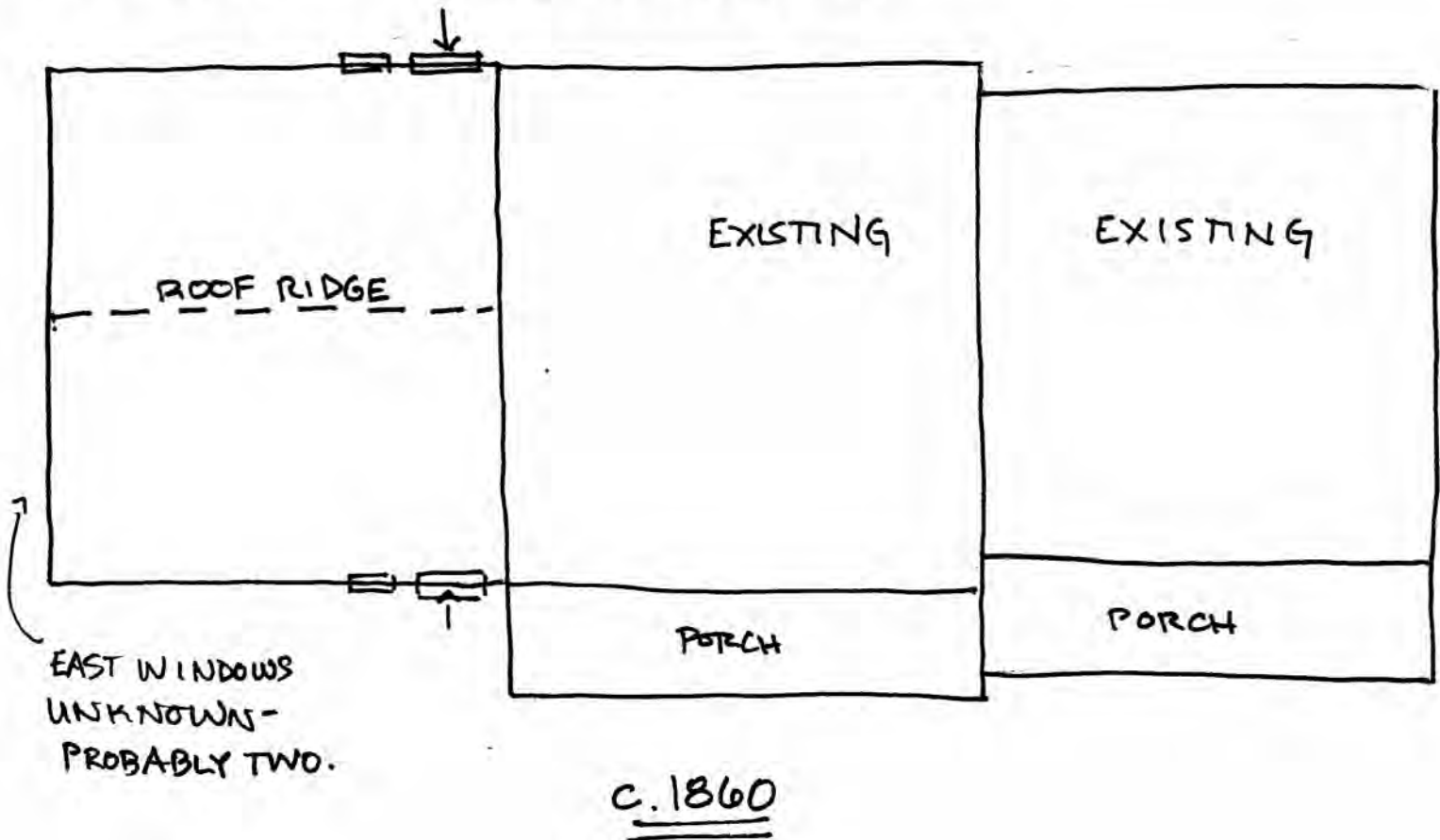
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SHeldon PECK-HOUSE EVOLUTION, p.2





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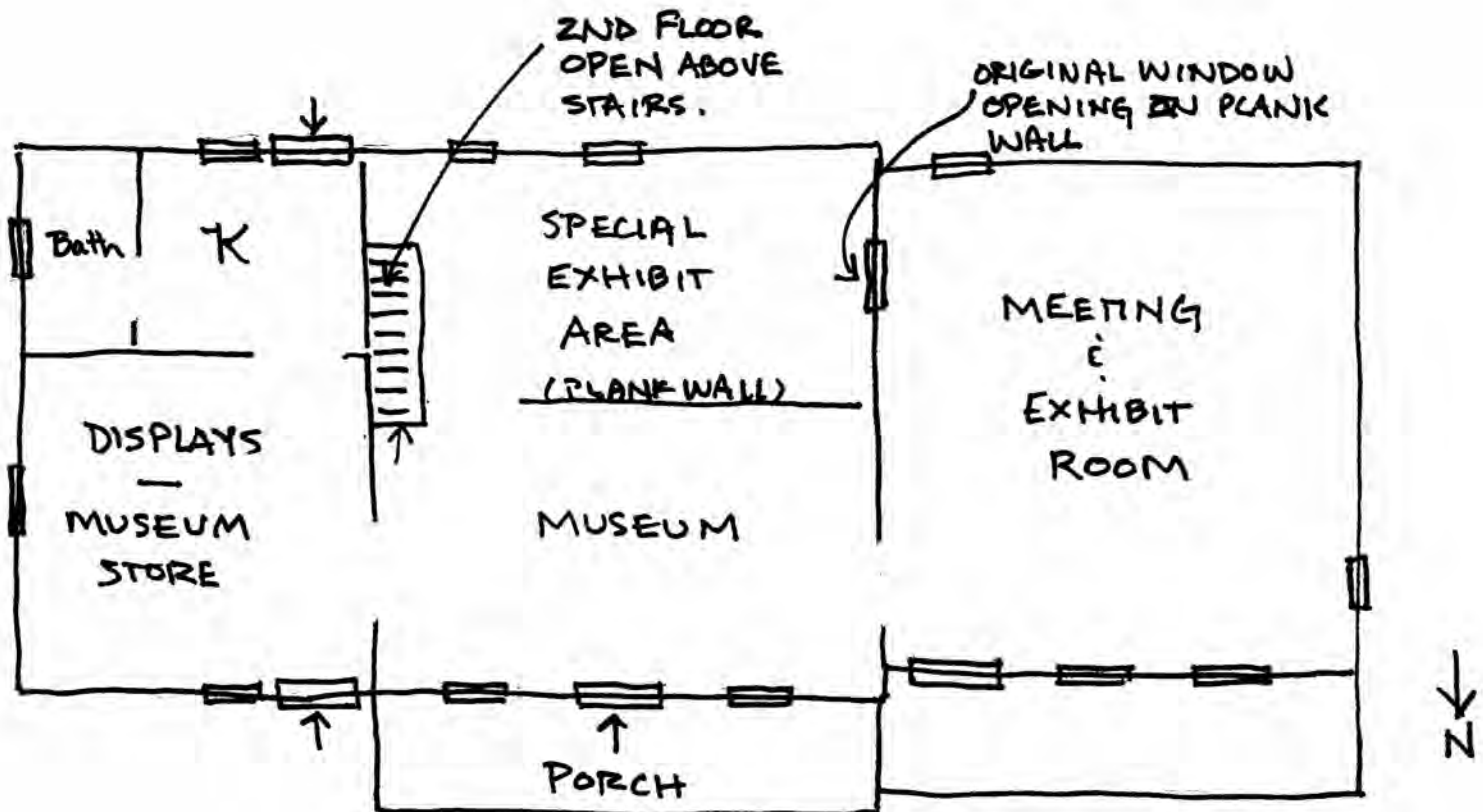
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SHELDON PECK HOUSE  
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

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Sheldon Peck House

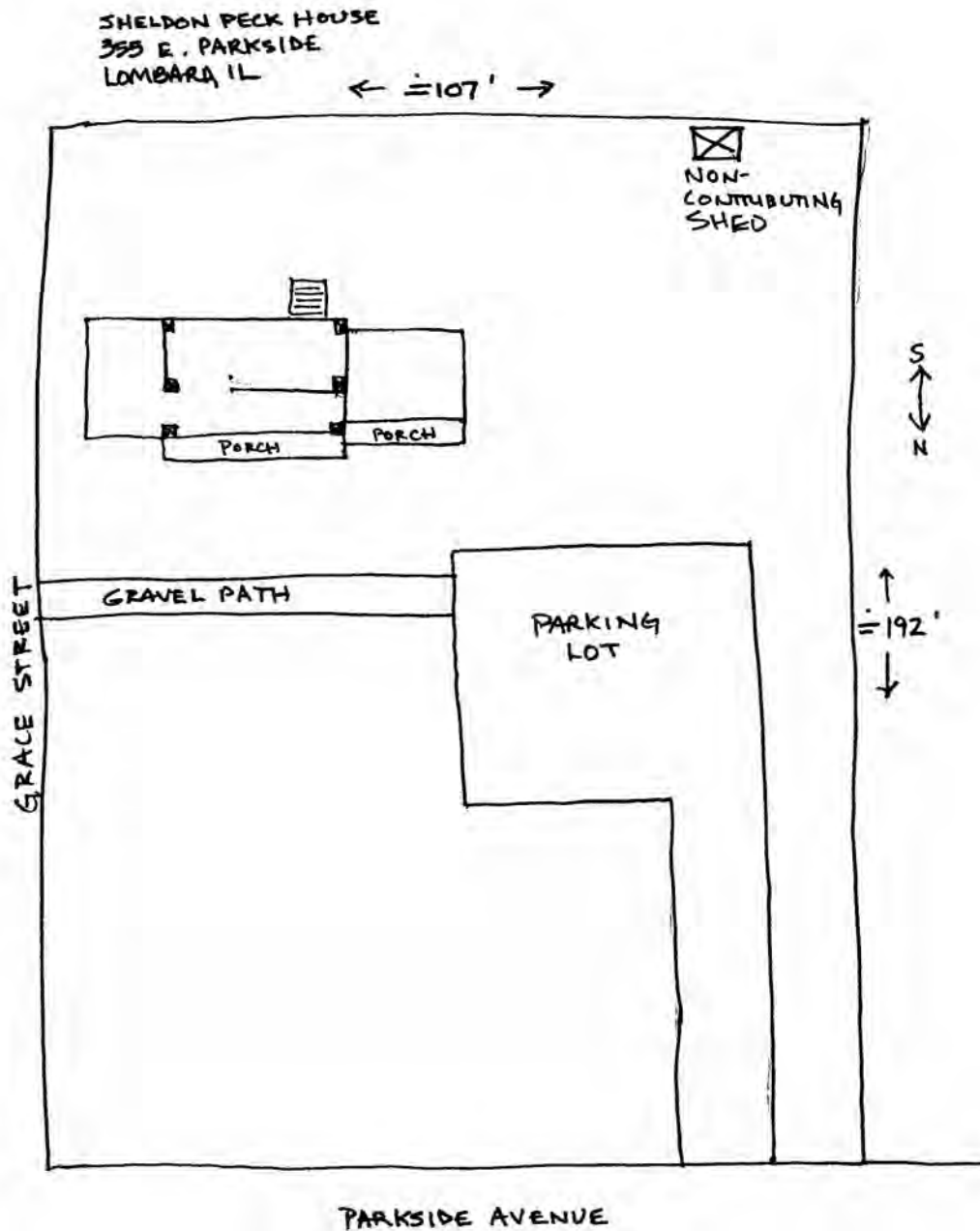
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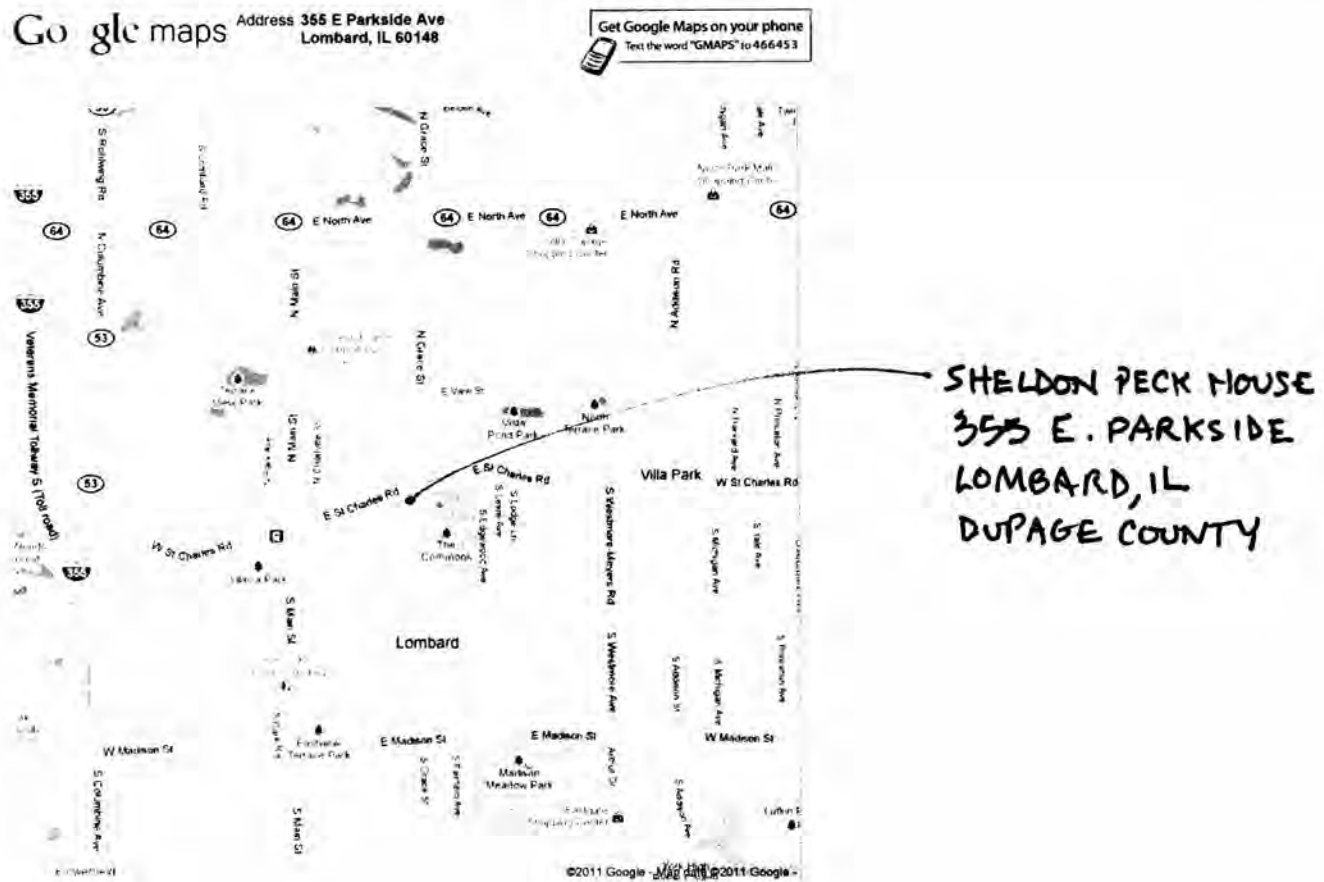
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Woods and Medicinal Plants  
11

















EXIT

OPEN

FIRE

COUNTRY STORE